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ABSTRACT

Provided are a Deputy Headmaster's practical directions to parents on ways they can use to help their children acquire basic skills and to respond effectively to other aspects of schooling. Initial discussion concerns the parent's role in education and parent-teacher contact. General principles parents should keep in mind are then listed, as are more specific guidelines for parents to observe in educating younger and older children. Subsequent sections provide numerous guidelines indicating ways in which parents can help children read, talk, develop as good writers, and acquire mathematics skills. Answers are provided to such frequently asked questions as: (1) How can I get my child to do homework? (2) Would my child benefit from supplemental learning activities? (3) Should my child repeat a grade? (4) How can I help my child to listen better? (5) Why aren't all the best children of one grade put in one class? (6) How can I improve my child's low opinion of himself or herself? and (7) Is discipline still regarded as important? An extensive home checklist of practical skills that children need is included. (RH)

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Number 51

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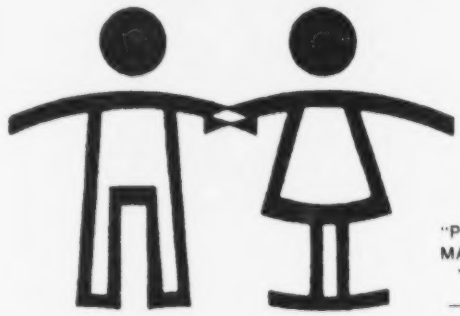

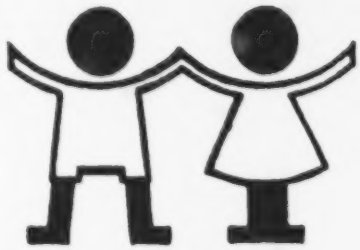

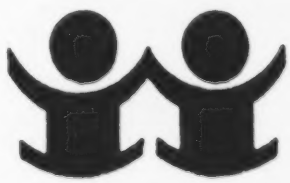

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HOW TO HELP YOUR CHILD AS A LEARNER

By Chris Maron

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HOW TO HELP YOUR CHILD AS A LEARNER

Chris Maron *Deputy Headmaster*

PREFACE

A Deputy Headmaster gives practical directions to parents on how to help their children to learn to read, to converse, to write expressively and understand maths. He also deals with questions most commonly asked by parents such as: How can I get my child to do homework? Should my child repeat a class? Can I improve my child's low opinions of himself/herself? Can I improve my child's imagination? He also gives a HOME CHECKLIST OF PRACTICAL SKILLS NEEDED BY CHILDREN, etc..

PARENT'S ROLE IN EDUCATION

Important though school and teachers are, it must always be remembered that parents are the principal educators of their children. A child's most important learning has already taken place when the child begins school. At five years old the child takes to the school a basic grip of language, a sense of number and some degree of readiness to meet and solve problems.

Parents continue to play a vital educational role throughout the years of schooling, especially in the areas of self-confidence, language skills and attitudes towards learning. It is a fact that a child spends only 9% of his/her first eighteen years in school - the extent of the parents' dominating educational role is evident in that statistic. With that in mind, this booklet aims to increase parents' awareness of modern teaching practices and also give guidance on ways to help children.

PARENT-TEACHER CONTACT

The booklet is not a substitute for close parent-teacher contact. Talks with the teacher help you to find out progress being made in school work; parts causing difficulty; how you can help the child at home; the child's emotional and social development; conduct in class; disciplinary measures used. Work samples by your child can be shown that clearly illustrate capabilities and difficulties.

Regular talks with the child's teacher show the child that you care - that what is done at school matters to you. To most children this demonstration of concern and encouragement is probably the single most powerful motivator to try hard at school since children will try very hard to please their parents. Another gain is that a child likes to see that some of the most important people in his life, namely parents and teacher, get on well together.

Parent-teacher talks also help the teacher in many ways so please do not use this booklet to replace regular parent-teacher contact but as a support to it.

HOW TO HELP YOUR CHILD

General Principles

1. Talk with the class teacher to find the exact problem and to be given helpful materials and advice.

2. Do not push too hard; do not overdo your help to the point that your child resents it or feels overworked with two heavy doses of school per day. Throw away the idea that you have to "stick at it until he/she gets it". There is always another day. The best time to stop is just before he/she loses interest.

3. Praise for effort is more effective in promoting learning that criticism.

4. Your help is working if your child is making progress and improving. Improvement will take time in coming. It is much more important that the child is improving, rather than when the improvement occurs.

   Draw the child's attention to any improvement in work, attitudes, study habits, etc. regardless of how small that improvement is. Since nothing succeeds like success, make sure the child has some measure of success during every lesson with you.

5. Do not compare the child with others. All that matters is that progress is being made, not being ahead of or behind others in time. Early development in children is not a reliable indication of future successes.

6. All children are different. Although the experience of teachers and other parents will be useful as a guide, do not assume that what has worked with someone else will also work with your child.

These general guidelines should be kept in mind when you read the specific suggestions on ways of helping with particular subjects.

I appreciate that there are numerous other demands on your time that make it difficult to implement fully the suggestions below. However, they will benefit your child greatly.

The Young Child

1. Get your pre-schoolers ready to begin reading:

   - talk to them about day-to-day events, pictures, etc.
   - play games that involve sorting pictures and objects (beads, buttons, counters) according to size, shape, colour.
   - show them how to thread beads following a set pattern.
   - play games like Dominoes, Lotto, Snap, Old Maid.
   - introduce them to simple jig-saw puzzles.
   - play word and sound games: nursery rhymes, songs, jingles.
   - go through the children's page in popular magazines together.
   - do plenty of reading aloud to them - every day, if possible.
   - above all, talk, listen, encourage, praise.

2. See children's play in its proper perspective: play is the child's work.

3. Provide easy access to a variety of toys: pull-along toys, dolls, puppets, cooking sets, cuddly animals, blocks of all shapes, sizes and colours. Have a dressing-up box containing old clothes and materials. The various role-playing ("dressing up") games are effective in developing language fluency. Make a special place available for this sort of play, such as a corner of a verandah.

4. Have a place in the house where children can feel free to create, experiment, paint and try out their first "writing". Provide the necessary materials: pencils, paper, paint, crayons, pieces of material, cardboard, scissors, scraps of coloured paper, clay, salt and flour mixtures.

5. Give a high priority to setting aside time for talking with them about shared experiences - trips, etc..

6. Give practice with rulers and tape measures. Encourage hobbies that involve measuring, estimating, building, knitting, etc..

The Older Child

1. Make reading part of the bedtime ritual.

2. Children's bedrooms can be very important places for learning: Bookshelves filled with exciting books, a place to write, a display board for writing and pictures, a shelf for models, pictures that stimulate discussion, a small aquarium.

3. Have regular visits to the local library. Lead children to books and libraries as part of the search for the answers to questions they ask.

4. Encourage older children to read to the younger - and even to write and illustrate stories for them.

4.

5. Give children access to a cassette recorder. Let them record their reading, produce im promptu "radio" plays, etc..

6. Encourage a wide interest in music. Listen with them to records they have chosen and ask them to listen to your choices. Join them in playing around with homemade musical instruments - sandpaper, blocks, etc..

7. Make time to sit with them and tell them stories - family yarns and anecdotes. Ask grandparents to talk about the family photo album or family "treasures".

8. Encourage impromptu drama in the house - family concerts, puppet shows, dressing up. Ask them to write short dramas.

9. Talk with the children about their favourite television shows. Discuss the stories themselves, the characters. Encourage expression of opinion about stories and people. Get the children to compare TV shows, make criticisms, and give reasons.

10. Remember that mathematics is more than "doing sums". Involve the children in practical maths: estimating and measuring around the house, calculating distance covered on family outings, working out petrol consumption, checking change when shopping, playing games that teach maths concepts.

11. Go for nature walks. Make a collection of shells, leaves, rocks, etc.. Prepare a display together and talk about it.

12. Encourage hobbies and collections, community clubs and activities.

13. Give children every chance to solve problems for themselves provided they have sufficient knowledge and skill. Real problem-solving can only become part of children's survival equipment when they live in a home where parents give them ample time and opportunity to try things out in their own way and to ask questions.

In General

1. Many children fail because of their low opinion of themselves. One of the first steps in helping children overcome this is to let them experience praise and success by providing tasks well within their reach.

2. Never try to help children learn a skill while you are feeling angry or irritated with them.

3. Discuss school work in a supporting way. Forget about marks, tests and competitions. Talk about new learning, new discoveries, new skills. Express pleasure rather than anxiety and disapproval.

4. Don't over-organise children's lives so that they never have time to play with ideas and express them.

5. Try to exercise critical and creative skills yourself. Let your children see you being adventurous in tackling new tasks.

6. Encourage the children to question and to discover, to make things and to invent, but remember that you cannot force a child to be creative. You can only provide conditions which encourage creativity to develop.

HOW TO HELP YOUR CHILD TO READ

We know that reading is the key to success in education. School can never be a happy place for poor and unwilling readers.

It is known that many children watch TV for more time than they spend at school but it is also a fact that more children's books are being sold by shops and lent by libraries than ever before. The gap is widening between the bookless, TV-dominated home and the reading home.

Ask this basic question: "Is my child finding interesting reading material and are conditions at home favourable to reading?"

What Parents Can Do

1. Do read aloud to your child every day, from as early as eighteen months. Discuss what is read. This will launch a love of reading.

2. Do buy a bed-lamp. Encourage reading each night before going to sleep.

3. Do praise every effort in reading, especially if confidence is low.

4. Do be seen reading for pleasure yourself and making visits to the library for adult as well as children's books.

5. Don't nag your child about reading, nor worry if the reading isn't yet word-perfect or equal to that of some other child.

6. Do not impose your reading taste on young readers. If a child gets a "craze" for an author or for "ghost" books, etc., don't stop it - there will at least be a gain in fluency in reading. The earliest reading must be found pleasant by the child.

7. Do talk about pictures in books. Every conversation with a child helps to produce a good talker - and teachers know that the good talkers tend to become the good readers.

8. Do read poems as well as stories.

9. Do provide easy access to books. Consider a personal shelf beside each child's bed. Are there reference books (atlas, how-to books, perhaps a junior encyclopedia)? Is a junior dictionary always handy?

10. Do explain print and books to pre-school children. Point to words as they are read aloud, showing the left to right movement, the purpose of illustrations, the progression page by page, the cover and title, etc., - all in a happy, playful way.

    Consider occasionally writing a little book about a shared experience, perhaps a sentence a page, with an illustration, then fold a cover around the pages and staple or tape to make the child's own book.

11. Do help with unfamiliar words. Readily tell the child the meaning of a word so that the flow of reading is maintained, but at times encourage guessing when the context appears strongly to suggest the meaning. Do not expect children to use a dictionary so often that reading becomes wretchedly interrupted.

12. Do buy books as often as possible - at least for birthdays and Christmas. Ask neighbours for books their children have outgrown. Suggest "book-swapping" sessions among four or five families.

    Do keep in touch with a bookseller who cares what children read. The teachers, school librarian and I are always happy to suggest books to buy.

13. Check your child can recognise on sight these words:
    On/Off Hot/Cold Poison or Poisonous Danger
    Flammable Beware

14. Go for "reading walks" - identify road signs, street names, ads, shop notices. Note symbolic signs and discuss their meanings.

15. Have your child practise reading directions:
    How to play simple games;
    How to assemble model kits;
    How to apply mouth-to-mouth resuscitation;
    How to follow directions for electrical appliances;
    For using medicine;
    For recipes.

16. Have your child practise consulting directories:
    Timetables (work out trips, e.g., to get to X by 10.30, which bus should I catch?).

    Phone books - find emergency numbers;
    how many people called "Jones" in your suburb;
    number of local post office, etc.;
    business: find a restaurant, plumber, carpet cleaner who is close to you, etc..

Street directories - by alphabetical index;
value of the key map at front;
work out shortest route from home
to X.

17. Reading newspapers and magazines:

Young children cut out pictures of objects which are then labelled;
Older children collect material for projects.
Can your child find information about TV programmes, films, live entertainment, sports results, cartoons. Can your child do the junior crosswords?

18. Always keep paperbacks in the car. Read to fill in the odd minutes at bus stops, on trains and in waiting rooms.

19. When your child is reading to you, concentrate on whether he/she seems to understand the writer's message. There could be more harm than good done by demanding a word perfect performance.

20. Do take advantage of TV shows your children enjoy. Most children of age 12 - 14 enjoy reading "Dr. Who" for example. Is there a book to correspond to a favourite show in your home?

Similarly, if a theme interests your child, e.g., dinosaurs, suggest you both look for books on the topics.

21. Consider adding a few sentences to photos in the family album. Consider keeping a family diary - let the children dictate the words, paste in photos and add children's drawings.

22. Read the school's aims and policy statement for the subject of reading.

23. If your child is not reading well for his/her age or is not enjoying reading, discuss it as soon as possible with the class teacher.

HELPING WITH YOUR CHILD'S TALKING

Talk is Important

The child who talks readily is on the way to being a good thinker, able to cope with school learning and likely to do well at learning to read and write.

Talk is basic to children's self-expression - that is, to personality growth.

Talk is basic to children's language growth:

Their talk and their thinking-in-language are inseparable - to silence their talk is to inhibit their thinking;

Their early writing grows out of their "speech written down" - so that confident talkers tend to become confident writers;

Their early reading is largely listening with the inner ear to a writer's "voice" - so that confident talking also helps reading.

Basically, it's a matter of encouraging the child to talk and question confidently. Confidence in talking and questioning usually extends to confidence in most things. Out of confidence comes an active curiosity that produces learning.

In the past, schools were supposed to teach children to read and write and little was expected of them in helping children to talk more confidently. Today the schools are also trying to give children plenty of opportunities to talk about their work but children are only at school for 9% of the total hours in a year. Obviously the home has more potential than the school for helping children's talking and listening.

How Parents Can Help

1. Listen to your children - they usually have plenty to say about school and neighbourhood experiences. (At the same time, you too are important and should expect them to listen to your thoughts.)

2. Talk to your children - they can be drawn into everyday conversation, making plans (where to go, what to buy), discussing outings, experiences, ...

3. Ask and answer questions - they usually have many questions of their own and should also be drawn into answering questions from you, "What will I do next? How will I go about it?" etc..

4. Let them join in adult conversations - sometimes, anyway. They then feel they should use language in a more serious key and offer more considered opinions.

5. Encourage them in language play - they enjoy joking, punning, wisecracking. Younger children enjoy language games such as "O'Grady says,", "I spy", or tongue twisters and nonsense rhymes.

6. Read aloud to them - they enjoy it, they learn thousands of words from it, and they grow up loving books. Ask questions, opinions, and guesses at what will happen next.

7. Teach them to handle the telephone - and occasionally make a call from a public phone.

8. Get them to talk about TV - to avoid the great temptation of passive viewing, first, insist on discussion of what the family will watch in the coming week, and second, discuss the programmes after viewing.

9. Emergencies -

   (a) make sure your child can clearly say his/her full name, full address and phone number;
   (b) make sure your child knows the emergency number 000 and could make an appropriate call;
   (c) Make sure your child knows the dangers of talking to strangers.

HOW PARENTS CAN HELP THEIR CHILDREN DEVELOP AS GOOD WRITERS

1. Encourage children to write letters to relatives and friends. Talk with them before they start writing. Encourage freshness and humour rather than cliches of the we-trust-you-are-well variety.

2. Give diaries for presents and encourage their use.

3. Make family scrapbooks of holidays and major events. Emphasise the value of labelling every item and writing descriptions and stories about times enjoyed most. The result is much more interesting than a mere photo album.

4. Have a family joke book in which favourite jokes can be written, and periodically read.

5. Let the older children write a family history and illustrate it with a selection of photos. This will become interesting reading material for the younger children.

6. Encourage older ones to write short stories for younger brothers and sisters. Stapled or sewn into coloured covers, these stories become "books" which are valued family possessions.

7. Get into the habit of writing notes to one another within the family - some serious, some funny.

8. Have a display board on which notes, cards, jokes, cartoons, letters and drawings are displayed.

HOW TO HELP YOUR CHILD WITH MATHS

1. Talk to the child's teacher to discover exactly the maths problems your child might have, to be given advice and perhaps materials to help.

2. Show your regard for the practical usefulness of maths. Don't say, "You're just like me; I was never any good at maths." (Besides, it is incorrect to assume that your children will inherit the same abilities/disabilities that you had at school.)

3. Help your younger children become conscious of numbers. Count everything with them; money, change, items on a shopping list, pieces of cake, spoons, people, etc..

4. Encourage older children to measure and weigh in real-life situations. First, use informal measures (e.g., paces to the letterbox). Later use rulers, tape-measures, maps and pocket calculators for distance around the house, on trips, etc.. Use the kitchen or bathroom scales for weighing.

5. Look around the shops for games that involve calculations, e.g., Number Boggle.

6. Encourage older children to take up hobbies that require "hands on" maths skills and a sense of spatial relationships - making models, assembling kits.

7. Try to develop your child's sense of number, size, length, height, width, volume, area, weight and time.

   If possible, use metric terms in front of your child, not feet, miles, etc.. It is still regarded as useful that children can tell clockface time.

8. Some appealing stories include a maths flavour, e.g.,

   "The story about Ping" by M. Flack (Picture Puffin). He has a mother, a father, 2 sisters, 3 brothers, 11 aunts, 7 uncles and 42 cousins.

   "The 500 Hats of Bartholomew Cubbins" is a well-liked Dr. Seuss story.

9. Remind your child from time to time that maths is a means to an end, it helps you to do things, e.g., buying ice cream, sharing sweets, building a cubby, learning music.

   Maths is part of cooking, wallpapering, storekeeping, dressmaking, magazine editing, engineering, driving.

   Maths is not a mystery or a textbook exercise: it is about solving problems in the real world.

Specific Help

"Should I help my child with maths when I learnt it a different way?"

The best solution, of course, is to find out the teacher's method - often it is not different.

Otherwise, it depends on the degree of mastery the child has with this specific part of maths. If a child has perfect understanding of one method, a different way will not hurt. Many teachers deliberately have children use various working methods when the children are ready for them, because this flexible approach develops a deeper appreciation of the maths concepts involved.

If the child seems to have no understanding at all of the particular maths in question, another way should be tried in time (and the teacher probably has done this).

If the child has some understanding, tread carefully - see the teacher and learn the method used in class. A different method at this stage usually adds to the child's confusion.

QUESTIONS MOST ASKED

1. How can I get my child to do homework?

A child needs three things to do homework:

Time;
A place;
A good reason or incentive.

Time: It is probably best if the child does homework at the same time each school day. The child's preferences for a particular time should be taken into account as well as any other demands on family time and facilities. Have a trial period of a few weeks on the agreed set time.

If the choice of set time for homework is reached by consensus, with everyone who is in any way affected by the decision, then both you and your child are more likely to try to make the arrangement work. The arrangement should not become too inflexible. The most important thing is that homework is done, not when it is done.

Place: It helps to have a familiar place to work where everything needed is close at hand and where conditions are favourable for uninterrupted study.

After your child has worked some weeks or months in the same place, the corner where the desk stands comes to take on a special meaning. It comes to mean "study" and whenever the child sits there it is like a starting signal for work, reading, writing. The place eventually helps to trigger study activity.

Where there are several children of school age at home it may be difficult to provide a place, let alone a separate desk, for each child. In these cases it may help to stagger the times when each child does homework. Alternatively, different children may prefer to work in different parts of the home at the same time.

Also consider the lighting, the amount of background noise, whether or not people are nearby, as important factors for the workplace.

Reason: The child is more likely to want to do homework, or at least be less unhappy about having to do it, if the work is found challenging, interesting and useful. The child also needs to see that he can complete it, that is, it is within his capabilities and any resources necessary are available.

Speak to your child's teacher if your child has homework problems.

2. *Would my child benefit from some extra tuition?*

Speak to the child's class teacher first to find the extent of the problem.

Some children recommended for extra coaching have certainly shown great improvement but remember all children are different and their school problems are different.

If your child has the motivation to study, is having problems with only a few subjects or just one and otherwise has a satisfactory academic record, is finding it difficult to concentrate in a large class, then perhaps extra tuition would help. If your child is keen on the idea this is a promising sign. Begin with just a trial period.

The amount of time your child may have to spend getting extra coaching will depend on many factors: ability; motivation; overall workload at school; duties and responsibilities at home.

Another problem is selecting a suitable tutor. The tutor chosen needs to follow the general principles listed elsewhere in how to help a child.

3. *Should my child repeat?*

This is a most serious, contentious question. A decision is not made without full consultation with the parents.

The decision to repeat is based on more than just progress in the school subjects. Social adjustment, work habits, age, attitudes and abilities are taken into account.

A child considered for repetition would be at least six months younger than the average for that grade; be at least near average in intelligence; underachieving; have a good attitude to learning.

In my experience, children who do repeat (that is, possess the above characteristics) are usually successful in later school life and do not seem scarred with a lasting sense of hurt and resentment.

4. *How can I help my child to listen better?*

Listening is a skill that can be taught. It is important because:

- over half of a child's time in the classroom is spent listening. Much of it is spent listening to teacher-talk.
- reading comprehension is significantly related to listening ability.
- good listeners are better adjusted personally and socially than poor listeners.

Speak to the class teacher if you consider this a special problem for your child. Ask to read or borrow the school policy on listening.

There are three main factors in listening; the listener, the speaker and the situation. Each must be looked at to uncover the causes of poor listening. Be mindful of the following:

- The example you set in listening. You may not be the best listening audience for children because your knowing answers often deters them from really explaining anything.
- Stress that every speech activity is a listening activity.
- Try not to repeat explanations two or three times.
- Constantly stress the gains to be had from attentive listening to others, radio, record, tape, television.
- The amount of listening required is not overpowering. Be alert to not straining a child's attention span by excessive talking.
- Wait to speak until the child is ready to listen.

Above all, a child must understand that listening is an active process. A child should:

- focus at once on the speaker's face and opening words;
- ask himself questions about what the speaker is saying;
- estimate at the end what has been learned;
- and, most importantly, listen FOR rather than listen TO - listen for a purpose (new words, emotion, meaning, a number, etc.) not just to a person.

A child can be made aware of listening skills and the importance of listening by keeping a record of all listening activities for a day - in school and/or out of school.

5. *Why aren't all the best children of one grade put in the one class?*

In some schools there are not enough teachers for such classes to be formed in each grade. More importantly, it is a questionable practice. There is much evidence that slower children are disadvantaged by this procedure. Once children are labelled "A" "B" "C" "D" they tend to perform accordingly so the system can promote success among few but failure among many.

In most classes, children can learn more from the other pupils than from the teacher (in work and behaviour) so each class needs good pupil models for this reason.

6. *How can I improve my child's low opinion of himself or herself?*

> "There is no value judgment more important to man - no factor more decisive in psychological development and motivation - than the estimate he passes on himself."
>
> N. Branden

It is stating the obvious to note that a favourable self-opinion is important. I will list just three reasons:

- it would seem logical to have many people with a mixed self-opinion, partly good and partly bad. Psychiatrists, however, are in agreement that this is not so, that one feeling dominates the other. People have either a self-opinion of success or a self-opinion of failure.
- loving and caring for others is an impossibility without self-respect. In the social world of the child - at home or school - respect for others is a necessity for living to function smoothly and is seen as dependent upon this self-opinion being satisfactory to the child.
- learning increases when self-opinion increases.

If you consider this problem pertains to your child, talk to the class teacher. Some general ways to raise self-opinion are:

- give praise: "Mother, let's play darts together. I'll throw them and you keep saying wonderful."
- concentrate on your child's strengths - the most effective way to develop a person's full potential. Develop the habit of not dwelling on the negative past and allow your childat home to boast.
- relate specific skills to more general, larger ones, e.g., don't just say, "That's a good drawing," but instead, "That's a good drawing - you have learned to use crayon quickly and well." An artistic skill has been related to the child's general ability to learn and so strengthens self-opinion.
- convince the child he/she will learn to work and behave - you know he/she will. At present, the child may just be "running a little late" in that development, a little "behind schedule", on a "different timetable" of learning some skills others may already have.

  Do not show any disapproval of your child's apparent inability to learn as quickly as most other children. Such a child needs help with a learning problem, not to be told how bad it is or how upset you are about it.
- many young children think in a black and white way about good and bad, right and wrong. Furthermore, some believe that a few instances, or even one, of a bad or wrong nature makes them bad. Discuss all the degrees between good and bad, right and wrong for specific instances. Convince your child that on the continuum good to bad, the time spent at or near the "good end" far outweighs the time spent at the "bad end".
- develop in your child the ability to praise others sincerely and appropriately. Research shows a strong relationship between the ability to praise others and the ability to praise one's self. In addition, of course, praising others often results in that person praising you and so improving your self-opinion.

7. How can I improve my child's imagination?

Education is sometimes criticised for being too concerned with knowledge. Fact is piled upon fact with little time spent on basic techniques of creative thinking. Yet imaginative problem-solvers have been found to succeed by asking themselves simple questions about any problem situation:

- What am I trying to accomplish?
- Have I done this kind of thing before?
- How about using something else?
- What if I made it bigger? Smaller? Reversed it?
- What could I combine it with?
- How about using several?
- How about doing the opposite.

In addition to providing a stimulating environment, other ways to promote imagination are:

- play common games with the rules reversed, e.g., noughts and crosses where three in a straight line loses; Mad Magazine game (the opposite of Monopoly: the first to lose all his/her money wins).
- ask your child during a book or TV show how he/she would finish the story. At the end of a show ask your child to supply an alternative ending. (Many movies have alternative endings, e.g., Heaven Knows, Mr. Allison.)
- ask your child to list all the uses possible for common objects. Aim for flexibility, e.g., for a brick; imaginative replies are make a paperweight; drive a nail; have as softball bases; grind for powder; make a tombstone for a bird, etc. not build a house, build a school, build a factory, etc..
- answer your child's questions, "Why .....?". Encourage your child to ask.
- plot titles: tell your child a very short story and ask for as many appropriate titles as possible. Praise those which are not commonplace.

8. Is discipline still regarded as important?

Yes. Children need to have limits placed on their behaviour at a time when they are not yet able to set these limits for themselves.

Some parents when visiting schools today are surprised to find children being given freedom to talk and move around. Children may be working alone, in pairs, or in small groups. They may talk with others, read to others, learn from others. It is very different from the sit-up-straight-hands-behind-your-backs days when children were expected to stay at the one desk - to keep silent and work alone. But discipline still exists.

Effective discipline is based on respect for the feelings of others. With this respect what begins as a caring and kindly adult-imposed discipline can result in voluntary self-discipline - but only if children are given plenty of opportunities for self-expression, decision-making and initiative. Self-discipline does not come through regimentation.

A HOME CHECKLIST OF PRACTICAL SKILLS NEEDED BY CHILDREN

SURVIVAL, SAFETY, SECURITY

Know full name .....
Write names
Know full address
Write address
Private telephone number
Name of parents' businesses
Business addresses
Phone numbers
Father's full name
Mother's full name
Know names of nearby streets
Travel alone from school
Travel alone from city
Discuss many courses to take if lost in city or suburbs
How to hail a bus, tram, taxi
How to take a train from city
How to approach an adult with a special request
Use a private phone
Use a public phone
What to do if in accident or a witness
What to do in case of fire
What to do in case of other emergency
Apply brake on a car
Cross a road
Know pedestrian road rules
Know dangers of fire in plastic clothes
Treat burns
Wash and treat different cuts and abrasions
Snake-bite drill
Boat drill and safety
Mouth-to-mouth resuscitation
Use thermometer
Take pulse
Bowel disorders
Eye drops
Sunburn
Lost in bush
Lost in snow
Dangers when swimming in rivers, dams, pools, sea
What to do or say if accosted by various types
Lock up house
How to recognise name of station and which platform to catch train
What to do if you lose your money or bus ticket

PHYSICAL AND CO-ORDINATION

Ride a trike
Ride a scooter
Ride a bike
Mount from both sides
Set up and climb a ladder
Climb a rope ladder
Climb a rope
Walk on balance beam (low)(high)
Catch cushions
Throw cushions (at you)
Throw stones
Throw sticks
Throw basketball
Throw tennis ball
Catch large round ball
Catch on chest
Catch in hands
Bounce balls left hand
Bounce balls right hand
Swim (100 metres for safety)
Operate a billy cart
Fly a kite
Vault a fence

PERSONAL

Get dressed
Tie laces
Replace a lace
Knot a tie
Thread pyjama cord
Sew on a button
Mend a small tear
Cut fingernails
Cut toenails
Clean teeth
Wash hair
Make a bed
Change sheets
Polish shoes
Clean white sandshoes
Comb hair
Use washing machine
Peg out washing
Hand-wash socks, etc.
Iron clothes
How to introduce a friend or parent, etc.

A HOME CHECKLIST OF PRACTICAL SKILLS NEEDED BY CHILDREN (CONTINUED)

HANDY SKILLS AND KNOWLEDGE

Measure own height
Weigh self on scales
Pack a travelling bag
Use a slide projector
Service a torch
How to query a mistake in money change
Know age, birthday, place of birth
Ages and birthdays of family
Join strings and ropes
Siphon liquids
Bait a hook, etc.
Attach hook to line
Count the piggy bank
Count out change correctly
Go shopping and know some prices
Service a bicycle
Locate and mend puncture
Erect a tent
Light a fire outdoors
Boil a billy
Pour out water
Toast over fire
Cook over a fire

BOOKS AND PAPERS

Find a page number
Turn pages of a book
Crease and tear paper
Tear paper using ruler
Fold a letter
Stamp and post letter
Address envelope
Write personal letter
Write thank you letter
Answer an invitation
Fill in a bank slip
Cut out paper shapes
Paste onto paper
Sharpen a pencil
Be conversant with map of Australia
Use Street Directory
Use Telephone book
Use Atlas
Use Dictionary

BOOKS AND PAPERS (Continued)

Use Encyclopedia
Manage stamp collection
Manage matchbox tops
Look up calendar
Know days of week
Know months of year
Wrap a parcel
Post a parcel
Know time of mail clearance
Use a typewriter
Use a calculator
Send a telegram
Read a bus timetable
Read plane timetable
Read train timetable

JOBS AND AROUND THE HOME

Clean windows
Cut flowers
Arrange flowers in vase
Knit
Use sewing machine
Organise rubbish and litter disposal
Recycling tins, bottles, etc.
Soldering
Change tap washer
Paint
Clean brushes - water - turps
Paper round
Other outside jobs
Care for pets
Look up correct care for pets
Sweep
Vacuum clean
Mop
Mow the lawn
Wash the car
Rake and sweep out of doors
Change electric globe
Connect up 3-point plug incl. stripping flex ends
Mend a fuse
Snib back a Yale lock
Know when switch is on

A HOME CHECKLIST OF PRACTICAL SKILLS NEEDED BY CHILDREN (CONTINUED)

JOBS AND AROUND THE HOME (Continued)

Hammer in nails
Pull them out
Use a saw
Use a screw driver
Handle matches condifently
Light birthday candles
Know a blackout drill
Plant seeds
Plant seedlings
Maintain a garden plot
Affix hose and sprinkler
Dig a hole
Tell time

AROUND THE KITCHEN

Use cutlery
Set a table
Wash up
Dry up
Peel apples, potatoes
Prepare a complete meal
Make tea (tea leaves)
Make coffee
Know when water is boiling
Light the gas and stove
Boil an egg
Poach an egg
Fry an egg
Peel a boiled egg
Use toasters
Make and butter toast
Butter bread
Open a screw top (which way to turn)
Cook a packet cake
Cook scones
Other recipes
Use kitchen scales
Use measuring jar
Greet and serve guests
Use several tin openers
Use several bottle openers
Use corkscrews
Regulate the oven
Extract ice cubes

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